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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*Memorandum*



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600  
9 November 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
FURTHER DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION  
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25X1

~~TOP SECRET~~

**Page Denied**

9 November 1965

HIGHLIGHTS

MACV estimates that about 600 Viet Cong were killed in a major battle fought northwest of Bien Hoa by US and Australian forces and an estimated battalion of Viet Cong on 7 and 8 November. The engagement apparently ended yesterday. Allied casualties were 50 killed (48 US) and 157 wounded (151 US). Recent reports that DRV Premier Pham Van Dong visited Moscow and Peking in mid-October

Pham probably undertook the trip to seek more aid. Pham probably also was pushing for a more coordinated stand on the war by Peking and Moscow.

25X1

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:  
Operation HUMP, a search-and-destroy ground sweep initiated on 5 November northwest of Bien Hoa by battalion-strength task force elements of the US 173rd Airborne Brigade and the Royal Australian Regiment, entered its terminal phase today; cumulative Viet Cong losses have been placed at 603 killed (403 confirmed by body count) and five captured, as against Allied casualties of 50 killed (48 US) and 157 wounded (151 US) (Para. 1). Two ARVN battalions on a search-and-destroy operation southwest of Saigon, in Kien Phong Province, yesterday inflicted significant losses on a Communist force of undetermined strength (Para. 2). Eighteen USAF B-52 strategic bombers yesterday attacked a suspected Viet Cong training and bivouac area in Bien Hoa Province, 30 nautical miles northeast of Saigon (Para. 3). A one-day ground sweep conducted yesterday by three battalions of the US 1st Infantry Division in Long Khanh Province failed to encounter any organized Viet Cong resistance (Para. 4). In central coastal Binh Dinh Province, brigade-strength elements of the US 101st Airborne Division are continuing Operation SAYONARA, an action initiated on 28 September to provide area and route security for Routes 1 and 19 in the vicinity of Qui Nhon (Para. 5).

25X1

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

25X1

A Vietnamese Government investigation into corruption in Binh Tuy Province, from which US AID representatives have been withdrawn, is still halfhearted and inconclusive and may complicate a planned military operation in the province later this month (Para. 4).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:

Another SAM site--the 41st--has been found in photography (Para. 1).

25X1

IV. Other Communist Developments: Communist supplies of fuel and transport equipment are arriving regularly in North Vietnam (Para. 1).

V. Communist Political Developments: The possibility that DRV Premier Pham Van Dong visited Moscow and Peking in mid-October

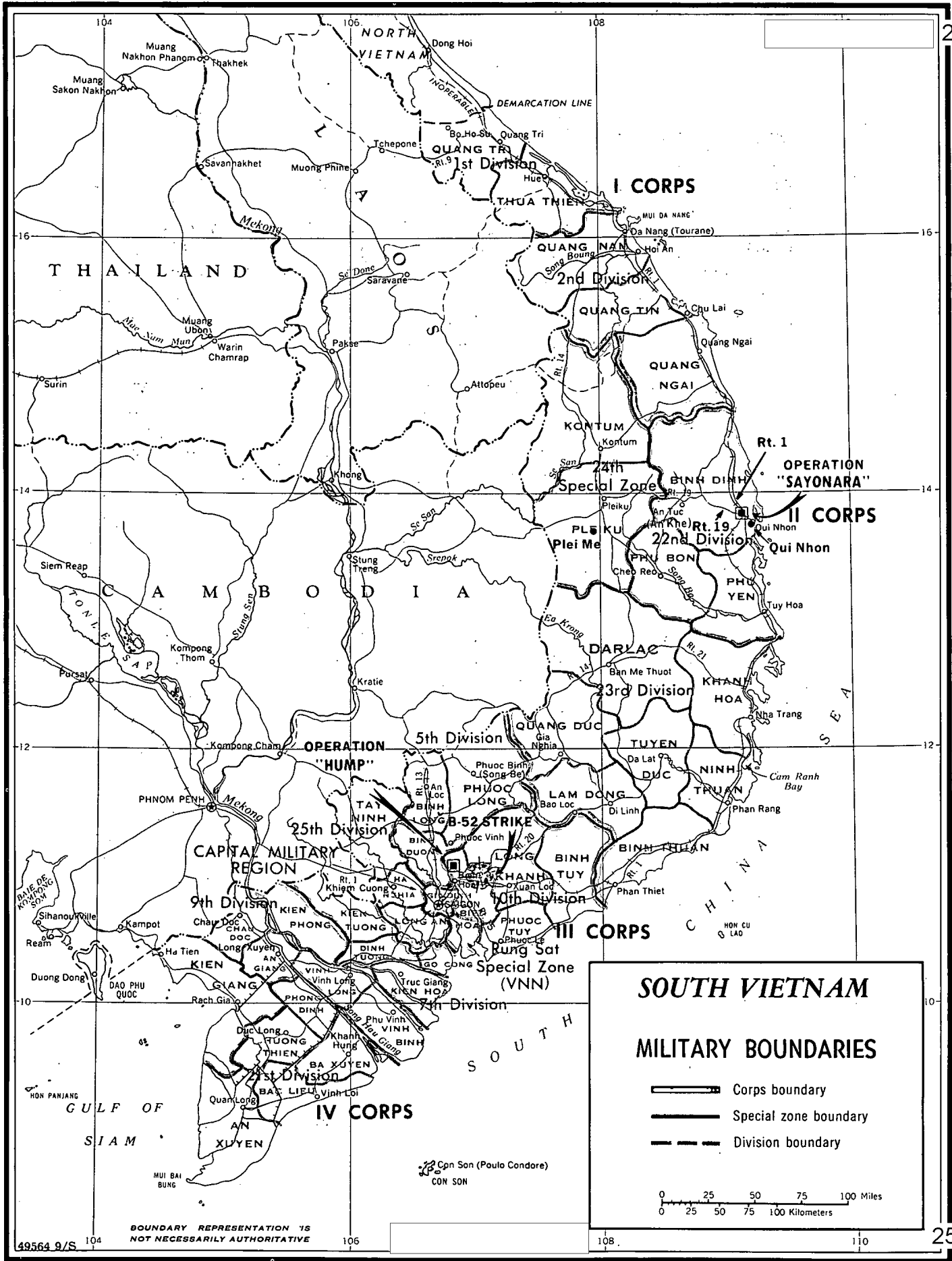
25X1

(Para. 1).

VI. Other Major Aspects: The DRV Ministry of Agriculture may be encountering considerable opposition from local officials to demands that rice production be increased next year, despite difficulties resulting from US air strikes. (Paras. 1-3). Communist supplies of fuel and transport equipment continue to arrive regularly in North Vietnam (Para. 4).

9 November 1965

25X1



## I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The joint US/Australian search-and-destroy ground sweep northwest of Bien Hoa entered its terminal phase today, with no further significant contact reported during the past 24 hours with battalion-strength or larger Viet Cong forces in the operational area. Casualties sustained by both sides during the major battle waged on 7-8 November have been revised upwards by MACV, with enemy losses currently placed at 403 killed (confirmed by US body count), an estimated additional 200 killed and carried away, and five captured. Timely and effective US tactical air strikes, heavy artillery bombardment, and automatic weapons fire against strongly fortified, prepared Communist field positions were primarily responsible for the high toll of enemy dead. Allied casualties have been placed at 50 killed (48 US) and 157 wounded (151 US).

2. Two battalions of the 15th ARVN Regiment on a search-and-destroy operation in Kien Phong Province yesterday engaged a Communist force of undetermined strength in a heavy firefight 80 miles southwest of Saigon. Twenty-five Viet Cong were killed and seven wounded, as against government losses of only seven wounded. The operation is continuing.

3. Eighteen Guam-based USAF B-52 Stratofortresses yesterday attacked a suspected Viet Cong training and bivouac area in Bien Hoa Province, 30 nautical miles northeast of Saigon. No ground follow-up action was planned.

9 November 1965

I-1

25X1

4. Three battalions of the US 1st Infantry Division yesterday conducted a one-day ground sweep in Long Khanh Province. The operational forces discovered 40 81-mm. mortar rounds and destroyed two tons of rice. No casualties were reported on either side.

5. In central coastal Binh Dinh Province brigade-strength paratroop elements of the US 101st Airborne Division are continuing Operation SAYONARA--an action initiated on 28 September to provide area and route security for highways 1 and 19 in the vicinity of Qui Nhon. Cumulative Viet Cong losses currently stand at an estimated 333 killed (81 confirmed by body count), 51 captured, 244 suspects detained, and 16 weapons seized. In addition, 51 tons of rice have been confiscated and 40-50 Viet Cong boats sunk. American casualties to date total 17 killed and 70 wounded.

6. The action last weekend near Plei Me, in which two companies of the US 1st Air Cavalry Division engaged an estimated Viet Cong battalion west of the Vietnamese Special Forces camp, resulted in the capture of two Communist .50-caliber machine guns, three LMGs, 21 rifles, 100 grenades, ten 3.5-inch rocket rounds, and 10,000 rounds of small arms ammunition.

9 November 1965

I-2

25X1

II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

25X1

3. No official details are yet available on the discussions between Premier Ky, now on a four-day visit to South Korea, and officials in Seoul. Press sources are speculating that talks concern closer military and economic cooperation, but that Ky is not specifically requesting additional South Korean troops. One topic evidently under discussion is a recent Korean offer to send additional medical teams. Probably also under discussion are the possibilities of Vietnamese procurement of goods in Korea.

4. The US Embassy reports that the Vietnamese government's investigation into corruption and misuse of US aid on the part of the chief of South Vietnam's

9 November 1965

II-1

25X1

Binh Tuy Province, initiated on 14 October, apparently has been clumsily and hastily conducted, with results still inconclusive. USOM representatives have not yet been returned to the province, but it may become necessary to return some US AID personnel before the investigation is concluded, in connection with a planned military operation later this month to secure and store the rice harvest. If the province chief has not been relieved by the time the operation begins, US personnel probably will be introduced on a temporary status ostensibly to deal with an emergency refugee problem.

9 November 1965

II-2

25X1



25X1

III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. Another new SAM site--the 41st--has been found in photography [redacted] The site is northwest of Kep and has five occupied launch positions and an occupied central guidance position.

25X1

25X1

9 November 1965

III-1

25X1

IV. OTHER COMMUNIST DEVELOPMENTS

1. Communist supplies of fuel and transport equipment are arriving regularly in North Vietnam. During the last half of October, almost daily shipments of aviation gas and jet fuel, totaling over 1,000 tons, were delivered over the Dong Dang - Hanoi rail line. Large truck imports, mainly from China and the USSR, have been noted recently. The DRV is known to be planning to import over 3,500 trucks and other vehicles from the USSR and East European countries and imports from China also are expected to continue.

9 November 1965

IV-1

25X1

V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. The possibility that DRV Premier Pham Van Dong may have visited Moscow and Peking in Mid-October

25X1

[redacted] Dong visited both the Soviet and Chinese capitals sometime between 12 and 24 October to discuss "urgent economic matters." Recent DRV propaganda has been stressing the necessity of maintaining some form of economic growth even in the face of the continuing air strikes and Dong may have been discussing matters along that line. It is likely, however, that if the premier undertook the trip a primary purpose was also to probe the extent to which the two bloc states are willing to support the Vietnamese Communists with military assistance. He probably also pushed for a coordinated stand on the war by Peking and Moscow.

9 November 1965

V-1

25X1

## VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

1. Evidence of friction between Hanoi and its local agricultural administrators over the regime's projected agricultural plan has recently come to light. A meeting convened in late September by the Ministry of Agriculture to discuss the tasks of agricultural production in 1966-1967 provoked "heated discussions," according to an account in the party daily. The Ministry of Agriculture was reported to have demanded that rice and secondary crop production be increased by ten percent over the 1965 level, despite the difficulties resulting from US air strikes.

2. The article did not specify what particularly provoked the "heated discussions," but it is safe to assume that local cadres and officials argued that it had been impossible to meet the ordinary agricultural goals even before the air strikes began and that in the current situation a ten percent increase is unrealistic. The interruption of transportation from air strikes, coupled with the drafting of agricultural workers into the military and transportation repair teams, has probably made the fulfillment of planned goals more difficult than usual.

3. The Hanoi regime undoubtedly realizes that an increase of ten percent in the rice and secondary food crop is unlikely next year, but it probably feels that to show any sign of a letdown in its demands in the face of the air strikes would only result in a general relaxation by local cadre. Hanoi has had to fight a continual battle against the tendency of peasants and even local administrators to keep what they produce in their own area rather than sell the required amount to the national government. If the regime lowered the state norm, local areas would remain self-sufficient but the national government would be faced with an additional shortage of distributable foodstuffs.

9 November 1965

VI-1

25X1

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